

MotoGP remains Blue Riband event for Malaysia - Dr Mahathir

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SEPANG, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's oldest and longest motorsports event, the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix is no longer served as a spectators' event but has evolved into a platform for Malaysians to compete with the world's best, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"As the oldest and longest international event in Malaysia since 1991, the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix continues to put our nation on the world map.

"Having the honour of officiating the circuit in 1999 and returning here now, I see the Sepang International Circuit is no longer merely a facility for hosting races and events.

"Over the years it has evolved to be a centre for developing talents, building infrastructure as well as knowledge and technology transfer in motorsport," Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying in the 2018 Shell Malaysia Motorcycle Grand Prix official programme book.

He noted that all the efforts done was to realise Sepang International Circuit's aspiration of making Malaysia the hub for motorsport activities in the region and as a catalyst for the country motorsports industry.

Since March 9, 1999, when Sepang International Circuit was officially opened, it has been the crowning glory to Malaysian motorsports and became the premier circuit as it has hosted numerous prestigious events including Formula 1 and MotoGP.

"Last year, we said goodbye to the Formula 1 Grand Prix but it is heartening to note that the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix remains the blue riband event for Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said.

Following a record-breaking crowd of over 166,000 spectators attending the three-day event last year, the Premier hoped to see another spectacular turnout this year.

Dr Mahathir noted that the Malaysian government will continue to support the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix.

"In Hafizh Syahrin, we have witnessed the participation of the first Malaysian rider in the MotoGP class and with the impending debut of a Malaysian team in MotoGP next season, the signs are positive that the sport will remain relevant and continue to flourish in Malaysia," he said.

The 27th edition of the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix starts tomorrow at the Sepang Circuit.

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